

## ACS Monthly newsletter

February 2017

AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

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Greetings,

Winter is more than halfway over! On behalf of the U.S. Embassy, ACS wishes you a safe President's Day weekend and what's left of the winter sports season. Back home the groundhog saw his shadow so perhaps the ski season will last a bit longer this year. As you go about your travels please remember your security awareness and please make use of our online resources for victims of crime should you find yourself in trouble.



Visit us at our new [website](#) for updates and information such as: 1) Applying for passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, or federal benefits; 2) [Making an online appointment](#) for services at the Embassy; 3) Viewing up-to-date schedules for [USFK outreach](#).

If you've registered your stay in Korea through the STEP registration program but wish to unsubscribe to our emails, **you must log into the STEP program again, put a departure date, and close your registration.** You can find the 'subscribe/unsubscribe' link on the bottom of the page. <https://step.state.gov/step/>

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### **Olympic Ticket Lottery has Opened**

**Entry into the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Games online lottery for ticket sales opened February 9th and will run until April 23rd.** Residents of Korea are able to enter the lottery to purchase tickets directly from the official Korean Olympic website. Detailed information on the lottery sale along with a link to purchase tickets can be found on the official Olympic website:

<https://tickets.pyeongchang2018.com/en/>

**You will need a Foreigner Registration ID to purchase tickets.** If you do not have a Foreigner Registration ID, tickets are available to U.S. citizens through the Authorized ticket re-seller CoSport. However, ticket prices may be higher and have a more limited selection than purchasing them directly from the official website.

### **Upcoming Special Elections in CA, GA, and KS**

The State of California will conduct a special primary election on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, for the 34th Congressional District to replace Xavier Becerra who was confirmed as Attorney General of California. This district consists of part of Los Angeles County. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, a special general election will be held on June 6. If you are a California resident from the 34th Congressional District, register and request an absentee ballot today at [fvap.gov/california](http://fvap.gov/california). Georgia and Kansas (April 11) also have upcoming elections. Please click [this link](#) if you'd like to check for elections in your state and district.

If you'd like more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program or need help with the absentee voting process please go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) or call FVAP at 703-588-1584 (toll free 1-800-438-VOTE or DSN 425-1584) or email ([vote@fvap.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.gov)).

### **Legal Issues?**

Are you encountering legal issues, has someone you know been arrested, have you been the victim of a crime? If so, the following links at the US Embassy website (<https://kr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>) can be useful resources:"

- Handbook "[What to expect when you are arrested](#)"
- Help for [American Victims of Crime in South Korea](#)
- [List of attorneys](#)

### Continuing Demonstrations

Large-scale demonstrations are likely to continue through the winter. Groups have gathered at Gwanghwamun Plaza (across from the embassy), Seoul City Hall, Gyeongbuk Palace, and other locations in Seoul and throughout Korea. Please continue to monitor the embassy's website and Facebook page for [security messages for US citizens](#).

Even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence. Avoid demonstrations, and exercise caution if in the vicinity of large gatherings, protests, or demonstrations. Review personal security plans, remain aware of your surroundings, including local events, and monitor local news stations for updates. Be vigilant and take appropriate steps to enhance your personal security.

### IRS Announces Changes to Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers

The IRS recently announced major changes to the individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN) system. As of January 1, 2017, any ITIN not used on a federal tax return at least once in the last three years will no longer be valid for use on a tax return unless the taxpayer first renews the ITIN. In addition, all ITINs issued prior to 2013 will begin to expire this year and taxpayers will need to renew them.

The first pre-2013 ITINs expiring are those with middle digits of 78 and 79 (Example: 9XX-78-XXXX). The renewal period for these ITINs began October 1, 2016. The IRS mailed letters to this group of taxpayers informing them of the need to renew their ITINs, and explaining the renewal process. The IRS will announce the schedule for expiration and renewal of other ITINs at a future date.

If taxpayers have an expired ITIN, not renewed before filing a tax return next year, they may face a refund delay and be ineligible for certain tax credits, such as the Child Tax Credit and the American Opportunity Tax Credit, until they renew the ITIN.

For more information about ITINs and ITIN expiration, see the [ITIN page at IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/individual-taxpayer-identification-number-itin). (<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/individual-taxpayer-identification-number-itin>).

### Change in Processing for Department of Defense Official Passports

Effective immediately, all **official** passport applications for Department of Defense employees must be routed through military passport agents located in the local legal office. ACS cannot accept **official** passport applications that have not been processed by the local military passport agent.

## Reminder of New Requirements for Passport Applications

The U.S. State Department issued two important updates to our passport application acceptance policies. Failure to observe these changes may cause delays in passport processing.

### Social Security Numbers Required



All U.S. citizens passport applicants are required to include their Social Security number on their application form. U.S. citizens who were never issued Social Security number can apply for one with the passport application, or sign a sworn statement declaring that they have never applied for a number. To submit a first-time Social Security application, you will need to have one form of valid U.S. government-issued identification. Find the SS-5 application and instructions at [this link](#).

If you have a number but do not remember it, contact the Social Security Administration ([FBU.Manila@ssa.gov](mailto:FBU.Manila@ssa.gov)) BEFORE submitting your passport application. This policy applies to routine services and will not prevent emergency travel to the United States.

NOTE: Applicants **without** an SSN will no longer be able to mail or courier their DS-82 (adult renewals) and DS-5504 (e.g. limited passport replacement) forms to the Embassy.

[Please make an appointment to be interviewed in person.](#)

### No Eyeglasses in Passport Photos

Passport photos in which the applicant is wearing glasses cannot be accepted. This applies to minors and adults. You do not need to replace your current passport if your photo includes eyeglasses. Photos that do not meet requirements will delay passport applications and possibly interfere with travel plans.



### **Upcoming Outreach at USFK Installations**



We offer passport, birth registration (Consular Report of Birth Abroad), and notarial services at USFK installations throughout Korea. Please note that you must have base access to attend these outreaches. Upcoming outreach events are below. Appointments are required for some services. For the most up-to-date information, visit our [outreach services page](#) on the U.S. Embassy website.

**USAG Yongsan:** Weekly on Wednesdays from 09:00-11:00 and 12:30-15:30 with exception of March 8 when we will be closed.

**Camp Henry:** March 30, 2017 (Thursday) from 13:00-16:30 and March 31, 2017 (Friday) from 9:00-11:30. Please call DSN 768-7692-3, or visit Legal Assistance Office, Bldg. #1805 to schedule an appointment.

**Camp Casey:** April 5, 2017 (Wednesday) and June 7, 2017 (Wednesday) from 9:30~13:30. Email [CampCaseyPassport@state.gov](mailto:CampCaseyPassport@state.gov) to schedule an appointment.

**Osan AB:** April 4, 2017 (Tuesday), May 2, 2017 (Tuesday), June 2, 2017 (Friday), and July 6, 2017 (Thursday) from 10:00-11:30 and 13:00-15:00. Call DSN 784-6719 or 7376 to schedule an appointment.

### **Embassy Closures in February-April**

The U.S. Embassy will be closed on Monday, February 20 (President's Day), Wednesday, March 1 (Korean Independence Movement Day) and the Consulate (including American Citizen Services) will be closed on March 8. If you are applying for passport or consular report of birth abroad services, please consider these closures and apply early! For up to date information about Embassy closures please visit our [website](#).